




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszcuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Finance and Administration Committee, Report

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (3.48 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Finance and Administration Committee's consideration of the Appropriation Bill 2014. From the outset I say that the opposition and Queensland reject the government's process for examining the budget this year. It was a complete disgrace. It was shambolic to have all of the estimates hearings reduced to two days and to have seven hearings running at the same time. It was a deliberate attempt by this LNP government—a deliberate attempt—to avoid public scrutiny from not just the opposition and the crossbenches but media scrutiny as well. We hear the government talk about policy. We hear the government say, 'What's the opposition's policy?' Let me say very clearly: our policy about the estimates committee debacle was very clear: return it to the original way. Return it to the full seven days. Why mess with something that has stood the test of time? The LNP has adopted Labor policy. Let that be on the public record. When you are talking about opposition policy, let it be on the public record that this government has adopted Labor policy.

I want to get into some substantives of this debate. One of the very clear issues that I was very concerned about was that, during the Stafford by-election campaign, there was a media leak where confidential personal information about Dr Lynham was released. I had fundamental questions to ask at that hearing to the director-general and to the Premier about the release of that confidential information. This government failed to investigate it at the time of that hearing. Subsequently, I have received advice that that matter is now under investigation. But it should have been investigated from day one and it suggests to the public that it was a cover-up because the director-general failed to act on it there and then. So we heard no response about that issue at estimates, did we?

I then asked the Premier a pretty fundamental, basic question about jobs. How many jobs have been lost from the government owned corporations? 'Don't worry, Leader of the Opposition. I'll get that answer for you. I want to make sure it's really comprehensive. I will get those details to you.' We got the answer and it was four sentences. Very comprehensive! This is supposed to be the most open and accountable government in Australia. It is a closed shop. In response to my question I got told, 'No, you can wait until the annual reports on 30 September.'

Then I wanted some information on behalf of Queenslanders about the amount of taxpayers' money spent on the Strong Choices campaign—a fundamental estimates question. What did the Premier say? 'Don't worry about that, Leader of the Opposition. Don't you worry about that. Go and ask the Treasurer the next day.' So I walked in and asked the Treasurer the next day. Once again, I did not get the answers. This is a flawed process. This is a government that is not intent on being open and transparent and will not stand up to public scrutiny.

It has been a disgrace. In every minister's session that I went into, I failed to get answers. I am not in there to score political points; I am in there to get answers to Queenslanders' questions. Queenslanders have a fundamental right to know how this government is spending their money. They cannot even give an answer about how many jobs have been lost from a government owned corporation. They cannot give information about how public servants' confidential files are obtained and they cannot give answers as to how much of taxpayers' money has been spent—or, shall I say, wasted—on their propaganda campaign called Strong Choices. The Strong Choices campaign, taxpayers' money, absolutely wasted!

I think the member for Gladstone summed it up. Each question from Labor members was met with argument, condescension or derision. This is not the intent of estimates.

(Time expired)